Engaging environments

Stage 2: Delivery of public engagement activities through Engaging Environments network

Announcement of Opportunity

Friday 5 October 2018: call opens
Friday 5 October 2018: Je-S portal opens for proposals
Tuesday 18 December 2018, 16:00 (GMT): closing date for full proposals via Je-S

1. Summary

The Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) is inviting proposals for delivery of public engagement activities through stage 2 of the Engaging Environments programme. We intend to fund one, 36-month project costing up to £1.3m (at 80% FEC, with some exceptions). The closing date for proposals is 16:00 (GMT), Tuesday 18 December 2018. This is an invitation-only call, open to stage 1 project team members and their collaborators: the successful project leadership team must include substantial membership from consortia developed in stage 1, although teams may include people from more than one stage 1 project and/or new collaborators.

Stage 1 of the Engaging Environments programme built consortia and capacities. Stage 2 will operationalise learning, leadership and networks from Stage 1, to deliver and lead substantial public engagement activities at scale, with the programme as a whole demonstrating national presence and the use of innovative mixed-model approaches. The successful project will be ambitious, large-scale with clear intent to achieve national profile and recognition for engaging the UK public with contemporary issues of environmental science.

The desired outcomes we aim to achieve through stage 2 are:

1. Documented delivery of innovative public engagement with impact at scale
2. NERC research community feel support and encouragement to engage, shown through demonstrable effectiveness in delivering public engagement, leading to increased capacity and capability
3. NERC research community seen as a leader in proactively contributing environmental science evidence to debate, across a broad spectrum within NERC remit, with different audiences
4. Researchers and public groups feel engagements were relevant, accessible and useful
5. Build a national profile relevant to identified stakeholders/audiences
6. Shared evaluation and meaningful legacy

This opportunity is part of NERC’s long-term programme in public engagement through which we are seeking to build strong engagement between members of the UK public and environmental science research and researchers, to provide leadership in public engagement with contemporary issues. Throughout this programme, innovative projects will challenge the current status quo, both in terms of adopting best practice in delivery of high-quality public engagement with impact, and building proficiency and confidence in environmental science leadership around the debate of contemporary issues that matter to the UK public. NERC recognises that these outcomes are likely to require collaboration on a national scale, across academic disciplines, including those outside of NERC’s remit, and partnerships with organisations and publics.
2. Background

2.1 The context

Through Engaging Environments, NERC is looking to support and encourage the environmental science research community to engage the public in a meaningful way, through delivering excellent public engagement activity, focused on contemporary issues of environmental science. This will contribute to UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)’s “vision of a society in which research is created, used, challenged, valued, and shared by all”. Engaging Environments will provide evidence and examples of the value of public engagement, which can be used to raise the profile of public engagement, of environmental science, and of NERC with different audiences.

People around the world aspire to escape poverty and improve living standards: achieving this whilst living within the Earth’s limits is a great challenge of the 21st century and NERC science has a critical role to play in meeting it. Investment in excellent, peer-reviewed science to find solutions to these global challenges is fundamental to our future wellbeing and prosperity. NERC advances the frontier of environmental science by commissioning new research, infrastructure and training that delivers valuable scientific breakthroughs and have a remit to promote public engagement and debate about the science we fund.

Public engagement has the power to make environmental science research more relevant to society. This is particularly prescient in a time when environmental science has such potential to inform debates around issues facing our society. Engagement with members of the public is essential in considering solutions to these challenges. There is an opportunity to capitalise on the finding that academics and researchers are the most trusted by the public to provide accurate and reliable information to achieve this engagement.

NERC is part of UK Research & Innovation (UKRI), which brings together the seven Research Councils, Innovate UK and a new organisation, Research England. The UKRI Strategic Prospectus, published in May 2018, has a focus on ensuring that everyone in society benefits from world-leading research and innovation, and highlights the importance of public engagement in creating social and cultural impact. NERC’s approach aligns with UKRI aims, focusing on our remit to foster high-quality public engagement with environmental science.

Public engagement can bring benefits to both research/researchers, and members of the public; NERC is keen to encourage both through this initiative. There are significant opportunities to develop and build public engagement capacity and capability in the environmental science researcher community and NERC is seeking to fund activity that will continue to build capacity and capability, and encourage development and adoption of new, innovative approaches to bring input of members of the public into research practice through delivery of significant engagement activity. We continue to recognise that this will require interdisciplinary collaborations, partnerships and capacity building. Although significant progress has been made in stage 1, in order to realise NERC’s ambition for public engagement with environmental science, stage 2 will need to continue to build and cement the necessary, long-term, meaningful relationships.

In August 2016, we published our public engagement with research strategy, through which we aim to:

- Convene informed public debate about contemporary issues of environmental science, including the ethical and social implications,
- Inform, interest and inspire members of the public and future researchers in environmental science and the processes of research, in a way that is accessible and relevant,
- Carry out public dialogue on complex and controversial issues. Actively listening to members of the public allows NERC to make decisions that are relevant to society.

At our community consultation event in 2017, we identified that in order to meet our long-term aim of commissioning a single, large-scale project we need to provide opportunities for collaboration and capacity building in a first stage, before calling for our second-stage, national-scale project in a closed call, open only to those who have participated in the first stage.
In stage 1, we funded five projects and a further hub project to bring together the cohort, providing opportunities for cross-collaboration, sharing and synthesising learning. The stage 1 projects developed a vision for “public engagement with environmental science to be the best it can possibly be”. Full, compiled learnings from workshops involving all five projects, convened by the Engaging Environments Hub during Stage 1 have already been shared widely within the stage 1 projects.

3. Scope

3.1 Desired outputs

The primary focus of this second stage of Engaging Environments is to operationalise Stage 1 capacity, capability and learning to deliver ambitious public engagement activities on a larger scale than NERC has supported previously through public engagement grants, achieving demonstrable impact, and building national profile and recognition for engaging the UK public with contemporary issues of environmental science.

A summary of the desired outputs and outcomes for Stage 2 (in order of importance) are shown below, all of which will be considered in the assessment process:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Documented delivery of innovative public engagement with impact at scale</td>
<td>Delivery of an ambitious and innovative programme of high quality public engagement activity on contemporary issues of environmental science at scale, and plans for how this will be shared and influence others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NERC research community feel support and encouragement to engage, shown through demonstrable effectiveness in delivering public engagement, leading to increased capacity and capability</td>
<td>Consolidation of active, equitable partnerships through networks and shared learning, and delivery of capacity and capability building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NERC research community seen as a leader in proactively contributing environmental science evidence to debate, across a broad spectrum within NERC remit, with different audiences</td>
<td>Examples of researchers contributing to responsible, informed debate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researchers and public groups feel engagements were relevant, accessible and useful</td>
<td>Delivery of engagement activity focussed on achieving specific objectives with relevant audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build a national profile relevant to identified stakeholders/audiences</td>
<td>Delivery of a communications and advocacy plan around Engaging Environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared evaluation and meaningful legacy</td>
<td>Evaluation activities and legacy planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2 Desired outcomes

The outcomes of this longer-term activity will leverage the leadership, networks, capacities and capabilities built in stage 1 with the following outcomes:

1. Documented delivery of innovative public engagement with impact at scale

Innovative public engagement with impact delivered through collaborations and partnerships that builds on best practice and sets a new benchmark for future projects:

The successful stage 2 project will deliver a significant engagement programme that achieves national profile. A variety of delivery models may be employed in doing so, which may be innovative in method, or involving greater numbers of researchers, audiences, or
other ways. The public engagement activities will serve as examples of a range of inspirational best practice to the wider research community.

The project will be led by a team with impressive, relevant track records from a broad range of disciplines. The team may include, or collaborate with, relevant partner organisations in order to reach public audiences. NERC are able to provide support in the development of those partnerships.

2. **NERC research community feel support and encouragement to engage, shown through demonstrable effectiveness in delivering public engagement, leading to increased capacity and capability**

Excellence in the quality of public engagement activity is fostered through stronger capacity and capability within the UK environmental science research community:

The project will raise the profile and embed the practice of public engagement in the environmental science research community, supporting the support (including skills, training, mentoring, advice and recognition) required. Proposals for the stage 2 project may identify ways in which approaches, innovations and learnings can be shared to begin to build legacy of a practitioner community. Although not a primary focus of the project, the project will exemplify “culture changed” in terms of attitudes to the value of public engagement within the academic community, as a contribution to this agenda, and bidders should articulate how this will be conveyed through their communications plan.

3. **NERC research community seen as a leader in proactively contributing environmental science evidence to debate, across a broad spectrum within NERC remit, with different audiences**

Responsible debate, informed by a balanced view (or views), on contemporary issues of environmental science:

The project will bring leadership to the debate, delivering engagements that are based on syntheses of the relevant environmental science evidence recognising different scientific opinions and taking an objective view. The project will provide examples of consortia and/or other NERC researchers contributing to this debate.

Bidders, including all partners, should be aware that it is an inappropriate use of NERC funding to provide support to activities that pursue lobbying or direct political change (acknowledging the difference between lobbying and evidence based decision-making. The latter includes providing information, synthesised evidence and encouraging informed debate to allow policy-makers to develop and properly assess policy options).

4. **Researchers and public groups feel engagements were relevant, accessible and useful**

Engagements are relevant, accessible and useful to identified UK public audiences and to research/researchers:

Engagements should focus on the UK public only. The project will adopt a robust approach to identifying objectives and audiences and tailoring engagements to them. Relevant and engaging contemporary issues of today may not be the same as those relevant in 3 or 4 years’ time, so the project will have horizon scanning capability and the ability to be agile in seizing new opportunities.
5. **Build a national profile relevant to identified stakeholders / audiences**

There are a number of existing and potential new models that can be used to achieve ‘national profile and recognition’¹. In this call, NERC is asking bidders to identify the model that they will employ. NERC is open to innovation from existing, tested approaches as well as new ideas; it is up to bidders to propose the model they believe is most appropriate to their project.

Applicants will be required to submit a fully costed communications and advocacy plan as one of the means to support the achievement of national profile.

6. **Shared evaluation and meaningful legacy**

Proposals should include evaluation and legacy plans, as well as plans for how these will be shared. All evaluation costs and reasonable legacy costs should be incorporated into the project. This will include proposals to:

- Deliver proportionate, purposeful and high quality evaluation of all public engagement activities
- Deliver robust evaluation of the continuation of the consortium and capacity building methodologies set-up in stage 2.
- Build capacity and capability to carry out proportionate, purposeful and high-quality evaluation and reflective practice on future public engagement activity.
- Demonstrate how sustainable outcomes and impact will be generated (including beyond applications to the stage 2 call)
- Work to raise the profile of the project, and maximise the impact of the individual activities, and the programme as a whole. Applications must demonstrate how project plans will be communicated to and/or engage NERC in advance of their delivery, so that we are able to champion the project to audience groups that we work with.
- Consider the impacts of public engagement activity through embedding it into existing reporting systems, such as the 2021 Research Excellence Framework.
- Consider how this funding can be amplified and its effects developed in a wider context, including through developing future research bids. Applications must demonstrate how Engaging Environments learnings will be built into NERC researcher grant submissions (such as through Pathways to Impact)
- Share learnings with stakeholders in the environmental science community, NERC, the public engagement sector and others, and set out plans to embed learnings within the environmental science community and the public engagement sector, within the communications and advocacy plan.
- Create a meaningful legacy

¹ Some examples of models that looked to achieve ‘national profile and recognition’ in different ways (but by no means an exhaustive list) include:

- **Hellblade**, a video game that gives players an insight into psychosis
- **British Science Association branches** and **British Science Week**
- **Local STEM Ambassador Hubs**
- **NERC’s Operation Earth programme** (~£300k)
- **National Trust’s 50 things to do before you’re 11¾**
- Sense about Science’s **Ask for Evidence**
- Google’s **Deep Mind**
- **Beacons for Public Engagement**
- **The International Science Shop Network**
To ensure an efficient reporting process is in place for the programme, the leadership team should:

- maintain oversight of the programme of activities to inform reporting within governance structures
- Complete and submit progress reports at agreed intervals to governance team
- As with all NERC grant holders, there will be a requirement to report through UKRI’s reporting system

NERC plans to use learnings from Engaging Environments in our long-term public engagement plans.

The group leading this second stage project will have participated in the first stage, but NERC is open to retaining original team configurations and would also be open to collaborations of expertise from across project teams from the first stage, and the bringing in of new, appropriate collaborators and co-funders.

### 3.3 Types of engagement

NERC’s focus for this programme is on achieving significant, relevant public engagement with environmental science research, rather than any specific contemporary issue. UKRI has adopted the following definition for public engagement with research:

"Public engagement describes the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of higher education and research can be shared with the public. Engagement is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit."

As such, NERC expects work funded through this initiative to value the contribution and expertise of researchers, practitioners and members of the public, providing opportunities for multi-way engagement and learning. There are many successful and established communications projects, where information is broadcast to the public; whilst a percentage of the engagement delivered throughout this initiative may employ this model for targeted aims, for example, to assist national profile building, the project should retain two-way public engagement at its core.

Public engagement activity should be linked to high quality research, which produces robust academic knowledge, whilst also benefitting relevant public groups.

### 3.4 Communications and advocacy

The communications and advocacy plan should be clearly set out in the application and will seek to identify national audiences and high profile leaders in sectors including media, academia, business, government and third sector as potential advocates. The plan will articulate how the project will broker effective partnerships to develop national presence and powerful advocacy for public engagement with research on contemporary issues of environmental science. The successful project will have communications and advocacy embedded throughout, and will demonstrate convincing plans for engaging with high-level advocates to affect change, as well as engaging with NERC researchers at all levels.

There must be at least one named person on the project leadership team, who is responsible for communications and advocacy elements of the project. The communications and advocacy plan must also receive attention from decision-makers at the highest level, as an integral part of management and governance structures of the project (for example, the media is one way to reach these people in positions of power). This will include routinely briefing NERC in advance of plans to raise the profile of the programme and ensure that they are championed to relevant audience groups.

Learning from other forms of engagement, including business engagement and knowledge exchange, can help consider how to raise the profile of public engagement activity. Brokering effective partnerships can create the conditions for public engagement with environmental science to be the best it can possibly be. This will also build on current significant clusters, such as large investments in environmental science,
sustainability areas of businesses, local and national university groups, national public engagement organisations and so on. For example, there could be scope to engage with sustainability considerations within businesses and how this links to consumer behaviour.

3.5 Governance

A clear governance and management plan must be included in the proposal. The management plan should explain how the project team will provide leadership to a diverse community of researchers and collaborators and how the proposed programme of engagement activities and its outputs will be managed to achieve the desired outcomes. The Advisory Board and governance structure should also be detailed, including information about how the governance structure and the balance of the advisory board is appropriate to the project. The Advisory Board will include membership from NERC Head Office.

3.6 Additional leverage

Applicants may include additional leveraged funding as part of their submission from appropriate sources. Proposals may also include development of strategies going forward to engage effectively with other relevant policy, practice, NGO and business communities. Where applicable, applicants must clearly state the source and amount of any existing leveraged funding (in-kind or cash) and/or how additional leverage will be achieved in the Case for Support form.

Members of the project team from business, third sector, or government bodies that cannot fund their own participation can be costed for at 100% for direct costs (salaries, travel and subsistence) (for full details, please see information about ‘Applying for funding for project team’).

3.7 Intellectual Property, publicity and branding

Applicants will be required to consider NERC intellectual property rules as set out in Section J of the NERC Research Grants and Fellowships Handbook, but consideration will need to be made on a case-by-case basis. Collaborative agreements can be put in place to enable all parties to better understand their roles on the grant and to clarify the intellectual property rights (IPR) position. NERC does not need to see these but applicants are advised to put this in place where necessary to protect their best interests. Creative Commons licences can be used wherever appropriate.

Recipients of funding will be required to acknowledge the role of the NERC in any materials and in any written or spoken public presentations about the project, and to comply with all reasonable branding guidelines. NERC considers our brand important to use when engaging with specific stakeholders, whereas raising the profile environmental science more broadly is likely to be more appropriate when engaging with certain public groups.

3.8 Ethics

Applicants are required to follow their institution’s ethical review process, health and safety, and child protection policies. For full guidance, please refer to NERC’s Ethics Policy. The ESRC framework for research ethics and Frequently raised topics, and may be useful to applicants.

4. Proposal requirements

4.1 Eligibility

Successful projects must start, as a condition of funding, no later than 30 September 2019 and be completed within 36 months. Activities must be free at the point of access for public audiences.

Project leadership team

The leadership team must include (in no particular order):
A range of expertise from across participating stage 1 project team(s),

Clear lines of responsibility and accountability to the project management and governance structure

The leadership team may include (in no particular order):

- Environmental science researchers,
- Public engagement specialists, including university public engagement departments,
- Other researchers across academic disciplines beyond NERC remit, or fields outside academia,
- ‘Publics’ and/or public-facing groups (for example, charities, NGOs, community groups, local authorities, commercial companies providing a public service).
- Optional new collaborators who did not participate in stage 1 projects.

When submitting proposals using the Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system (see full details in the Application Process section):

- The main applicant ('Principal Investigator' (PI) in Je-S) to this call must meet NERC eligibility rules as set out in the NERC Research Grants and Fellowships Handbook. Proposals should be prepared and submitted by the Principal Investigator at the lead research organisation, but should be co-created with input from all of the leadership team, and should represent the proposed work of the entire consortia.
- When research council funding is requested for members of the leadership team, they must be entered into Je-S as ‘Co-Investigators’. This includes both those that meet NERC eligibility rules as set out in the NERC Research Grants and Fellowships Handbook who would be funded at 80% FEC, and those from business, third sector or government bodies that cannot fund their own participation and would be funded at 100% for direct costs (salaries, travel and subsistence).
- Those on the leadership team who will not receive funding directly from the award, but will have an integral role in the proposed project must be entered into Je-S as ‘Project Partners’. Minor Directly Incurred costs may be requested to facilitate collaboration (funded at 100%). An organisation should only be named as a Project Partner if it is providing specific contributions (either in cash or in-kind) to the project. There is no limit to the number of Project Partners.
- The Principal Investigator must ensure that all costs associated with the leadership team are fully justified within the ‘Justification of Resources’ attachment.

100% for direct costs (salaries, travel and subsistence) requested for business, third sector or government body' participation must not exceed 30% of the full 100% FEC cost of the grant.

5. Application Process

5.1 How to apply

Proposals must be submitted using the Research Councils' Joint Electronic Submission system (Je-S). The call for proposals will open in Je-S on Friday 5 October 2018 and closes on Tuesday 18 December 2018, 16:00 (GMT). Late proposals will not be accepted.

NERC reserves the right to reject proposals judged not to fit within the scope of the call, prior to the assessment panel. No associated studentships can be requested under this call.

Applicants must ensure that their proposal is submitted to NERC by 16:00 (GMT) on the closing date. Applicants should leave enough time for their proposal to pass through their organisation’s Je-S submission route before this date. Any proposal that is incomplete, or does not meet NERC’s eligibility criteria or follow NERC’s submission rules (see NERC Research Grants and Fellowships Handbook), will be rejected and will not be considered. Applicants to this call may submit only one proposal as the Principal Investigator.

Proposals should largely be completed in the normal way, following the guidance in the NERC Research Grants and Fellowships Handbook and the Joint Electronic Submissions (Je-S) Handbook, with the
following exception, specific to this call. Costs should be requested at 80% FEC in the normal way for eligible applicants. However, members of the leadership team from business, third sector or government bodies that cannot fund their own participation can be costed at 100% for direct costs (salaries, travel and subsistence) (for full details, please see information about ‘Applying for funding for leadership team’).

5.2 Proposal Components

As well as the Je-S proforma, a number of attachments, containing information to support your proposal and further demonstrate how the proposal meets the call assessment criteria, must also be uploaded and submitted. The Je-S proforma includes a series of sections to be completed online, including the summary and objectives of the proposal (note the summary will be publically available) and the finances requested.

All proposals must contain the following attachments:

1. **Case for support** (total of up to 10 sides A4) comprising:
   a. Description of the proposed work (up to 6 sides A4), including:
      - Vision, mission, aims and objectives.
      - A description of how the requirements for programme coordination will be planned and implemented
      - Outputs and outcomes
      - Communications and advocacy plan
      - Governance plan
      - Additional leverage plans
      - Reporting, evaluation and legacy plans
   b. Previous Track Record of key individuals (up to 2 sides of A4): a list of the full leadership team and contributions from those not listed as ‘Co-Investigators’ or ‘Project Partners’. Please state full name, job title and organisation (acknowledging that this is likely to evolve over the course of the project), and the relevant knowledge and experience of the leadership team and how this can be applied to deliver the objectives of the call. Assessment panels consider the strength of the relationship between the ‘Principal Investigator’ and the leadership team, and therefore the potential for the proposal to achieve NERC’s intended outcomes.
   c. A work plan for the activity (up to 2 sides of A4), including a Gantt chart and detailed work plan for the first year, and a broad forecast plan for subsequent years including anticipated milestones and deliverables.

2. **Justification of resources**: full justification of resources requested including those for involving all members of the leadership team, which should include an itemised budget breakdown (up to 2 sides A4). Members of the leadership team do not need to be listed as a co-investigator if they have secured their own source of funding. They should be included in the Project Partners section of the proposal, where details of their funding source should be provided. This section should also include details and justification of the time commitment of the programme coordinator (% FTE), and any other support roles required.

3. **Letters of support** from ‘Project Partners’ will be taken into account in the assessment process (letters of support from other members of the leadership team will not be required). Low quality and/or clearly last minute letters of support will adversely affect a proposal’s assessment. The validated letter of support must also contain the following information:
   - A benefit statement from the organisation of the ‘Project Partner’ describing how the proposed activity will positively impact the organisation and its work. This could include and explanation of the organisational drivers underpinning the ‘Project Partner’s’ involvement in the proposal, the ‘Project Partner’s’ objectives which the proposed activity will help meet, and the likely outcomes and impacts of the activity.
   - The nature of the collaboration i.e. how the ‘Project Partner’ will be involved and add value.
   - The contributions, for example, cash, project support, the ‘Project Partner’ will make and an assurance that the ‘Project Partner’ is committed to the project for its duration and that those contributions will be made.
Proposals may contain the following optional attachments, where relevant:

- Up to 2 sides A4 for each CV
- Data management plan (up to 1 side A4): any data of long-term value produced by the proposed activities will be subject to the NERC Data Policy. Proposals may include an outline data management plan to indicate what data, if any, of long-term value will be produced. As data sets may include information from engagement activities with members of the public, NERC will make arrangements for these to be managed in an appropriate data centre (which may be more relevant to ESRC). NERC will cover the data centre costs directly on behalf of the programme for archival and curation services, but applicants should ensure they request sufficient resource to cover preparation of data for archiving by the research team.

If there are plans to have environmental data outputs or services and facilities usage, please contact NERC to discuss.

Log in with your Je-S account, click on Documents and create a new Document. Complete Add a Document: select Council (NERC); select Document Type (Standard Proposal); select Scheme (NC&C); and select Call/Type (NERC - NERC Engaging Environments 2018).

With the exception of letters of support, all attachments submitted through the Je-S system must be completed in single-spaced typescript of minimum font size 11 point (Arial or other sans serif typeface of equivalent size to Arial 11), with margins of at least 2cm. Please note that Arial narrow, Calibri and Times New Roman are not allowable font types and any proposal which has used either of these font types within their submission will be rejected. References and footnotes should also be at least 11 point font and should be in the same font type as the rest of the document. Headers and footers should not be used for references or information relating to the scientific case. Applicants referring to websites should note that referees may choose not to use them.

Applicants should ensure that their proposal conforms to all eligibility and submission rules; otherwise their proposal may be rejected without peer review. More details on NERC’s submission rules can be found in the NERC research grant and fellowships handbook and in the guidance on ‘How to apply’ on the NERC website. Please note that on submission to council ALL non-PDF documents are converted to PDF, the use of non-standard fonts may result in errors or font conversion, which could affect the overall length of the document.

Additionally, where non-standard fonts are present, and even if the converted PDF document may look unaffected in the Je-S System, when it is imported into the Research Councils Grants System some information may be removed. We therefore recommend that where a document contains any non-standard fonts (scientific notation, diagrams etc.), it should be converted to PDF before attaching it to the proposal.

If you have forgotten your account log in details or are unsure whether you already have an account, please contact the Je-S helpdesk who will advise you. Email: JeSHelp@rcuk.ac.uk or phone: +44 (0) 1793 44 4164.

5.3 Applying for funding for project team from business, third sector or government bodies

Individuals based in businesses, third sector or government bodies may be named as:

- ‘Co-Investigator’ in Je-S (if a collaborator on the project, as part of the leadership team and receiving funding through the grant), or
- ‘Project Partner’ in Je-S (if providing significant cash or in-kind contributions to the project), or
- Sub-contractor (if purely providing a service, with no intellectual property, author or other rights) and receive funds through the lead organisation (associated with the ‘Principal Investigator’).
Business, third sector or government body co-investigators (Co-Is) based in the UK can be included on proposals responding to this call. For full details, applicants should refer to ESRC guidance if applying for the inclusion of UK business, third sector or government body co-investigators.

When a PI includes a business, third sector or government body Co-I on their application they must ensure that all associated costs are fully justified within the Justification of Resources attachment. NERC will fund 100% of justified costs, however, the project costs associated with these types of Co-I contributions must not exceed 30% of the overall cost of the grant (at 100% FEC). (It is important to note that the combined costs for international co-investigators, and UK business, third sector and government body coinvestigators must not exceed 30% of the total FEC of the grant application.)

Eligible costs vary between business, third sector and government bodies, and applicants must refer to the ESRC guidance for full details.

State Aid

Applicants should refer to Terms and Conditions of Research Council Grants:

“The Research Organisation shall comply with European Union state aid law in their own uses of Research Council funding. In the case of any breach of state aid law the Research Council may be required to recover all or some funding, together with interest. The Research Council may also be required to withhold funding or aspects of funding where the Research Organisation is subject to a state aid inquiry or which has an outstanding recovery notice against it.”

Whilst it is unlikely that State Aid applies to NERC funds used to include a business, third sector or government body Co-I, NERC will carry out checks to assure that applications do not fall under state aid. Outputs of the project should be openly available and applicants should carefully consider agreements around Intellectual Property (section 3.7).

6. Assessment process

6.1 Peer Review and Assessment panel

There is a two-stage assessment process for this call:

1. Full proposals will undergo expert peer review based on the assessment criteria below. Each proposal is assigned to at least two reviewers, chosen to ensure that their combined expertise provides good coverage of the scope of the proposal.
2. Applicants will be invited to present their proposal to an interview panel to answer any questions raised.

Assessment will be based on the written proposal, expert peer review and the interview panel. The peer reviewers and interview panel will be comprised of members with relevant expertise, ensuring a balance of different perspectives, disciplines, expertise and affiliations, with diversity in mind including:

- Public engagement specialism
- Public engagement practitioner
- Environmental science specialism
- Non-academic engagement organisation
- Institutional and cross-disciplinary perspectives

During the interview, in cases where there is a conflict of interest (for example, where a panel member has pre-existing links to an applicant), the individual(s) in question will leave the room while the proposal is discussed.

NERC will use the recommendations of the interview panel along with the overall call requirements and the available budget in making the final funding decisions.
Panel feedback will be provided by NERC to both successful and unsuccessful applicants.

NERC reserves the right not to fund up to the limit allocated to the call and to make changes to the budgetary limits of the successful grants, if applications are not considered of a high enough quality by the evaluation panel.

6.2 Assessment Criteria

The evaluation panel will consider the following when assessing proposals:

1) Quality and appropriateness of proposed approach for delivering NERC’s outcomes:
   - Documented delivery of innovative public engagement with impact at scale
   - NERC research community feel support and encouragement to engage, shown through demonstrable effectiveness in delivering public engagement, leading to increased capacity and capability
   - NERC research community seen as a leader in proactively contributing environmental science evidence to debate, across a broad spectrum within NERC remit, with different audiences
   - Researchers and public groups feel engagements were relevant, accessible and useful
   - Build a national profile relevant to identified stakeholders/audiences
   - Shared evaluation and meaningful legacy

2) Track Record:
   - relevant credentials and knowledge
   - experience of managing or co-ordinating a programme of comparable size and type
   - proven track record of communicating and advocacy around complex messages on related issues to both audiences
   - knowledge of intellectual property and other exploitation issues
   - strong network of contacts relevant to stage 1

3) Value for Money
   - appropriate allocation of funds and justification of resources
   - added value – involvement with other related initiatives where synergies may be made.

7. Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday 5 October 2018</td>
<td>Call launched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 5 October 2018</td>
<td>Je-S portal opens for proposals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 18 December 2018, 16:00 (GMT)</td>
<td>Call closes for full proposals (via Je-S), followed by NERC checks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 15 January 2019-Tuesday 12 March</td>
<td>Peer review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End-March 2019 (TBC)</td>
<td>Proposal interview panel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 29 March 2019</td>
<td>Successful applicants informed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 September 2019</td>
<td>Latest start date for projects, which must be completed within 36 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 September 2022</td>
<td>Latest completion date for projects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Contacts

We are available to support you during the application process. Please contact Hannah King, Public Engagement Officer, via email (publicengagement@nerc.ac.uk) or phone: 01793 411572.